

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A communications system includes a physical layer hardware unit and a processing unit. The physical layer hardware unit is adapted to communicate data over a communications channel. The physical layer hardware unit is adapted to receive unencrypted control codes and encrypted user data over the communications channel and transmit an upstream data signal over the communications channel based on the control codes. The processing unit is adapted to execute a software driver for interfacing with the physical layer hardware unit. The software driver includes program instructions for implementing a protocol layer to decrypt the user data and provide the upstream data to the physical layer hardware unit. A method for configuring a transceiver includes receiving unencrypted control codes over a communications channel; receiving encrypted user data over the communications channel; and transmitting an upstream signal over the communications channel based on transmission assignments defined by the control codes.